

THE NUR AFSHAN

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Editorial Notes.

Not long since, our American Newspapers reported the gift of Rs. 300,00,000 for a Scientific and Technical University in the City of Washington. Now comes the more astonishing news of the wonderful gift of Mrs. Leland Stanford of California, who has added no less than nine crores of rupees to the already magnificent gifts of herself and her husband, which amounted to nearly as much more for the further endowment of Leland Stanford University. This surpasses the magnificent gifts of Mr. John Rockefeller of New York, who has spent three crores rupees in the endowment and buildings of the Chicago University.

Who are these men and women, conspicuous among many—who have devoted millions of dollars for the establishment of Universities and Colleges for the advance of human knowledge and learning? The most of them are devout Christian men, who believe that the highest attainments in scientific study will in no way disturb the fixity of Bible truth but rather establish it.

It is exceedingly encouraging to find Christian men in India, filled with this same sublime confidence in the work of higher education. The announcement has just been made that Sir Kanwar Harnam Singh, K. C. I. E., has just devoted Rs. 50,000 for the endowment of scholarships to be devoted to the cause of the higher education of Christian young men. May this noble

example become an inspiration to others.

The advancement of the English language in the world, during the century just gone, is truly marvellous. At the beginning of that century, the English speaking people of the world numbered 12,000,000. At the end of the century, the number was about 180,000,000. It now holds the first place among languages spoken by Christians.

The excommunication of Mr. K. Ramuni Meason M. A. by the Raja of Cochin, because he had violated the rules of Hindu Orthodoxy, is an illustration of the real source of power in the caste system. Many of the priests were willing to readmit the young man,—at least they raised no objection to the proposal. The Raja therefore, was left to shoulder the responsibility. To be sure he called the chief Brahmins together and received their sanction to the excommunication. He can point to them and say he acted in accord with the dictum of his priests. These in their turn can say they were called by His Highness the Raja and what could they do!

We hope that Mr. Ramuni Meason will defy the caste tyranny of his ignorant countrymen.

An editorial article in the *Arya Messenger*, entitled *Christianity in Europe*, affords much matter for reflection. In the beginning the writer tells us that "it was almost universally recognized by all impartial observers that in India, at least, the prospect of Christianity, we mean dogmatic Christianity,

were not bright." Just what distinction this writer makes between "Christianity" and "dogmatic Christianity" we do not know. But at any rate a certain "bold and intrepid author" exposed the methods of missionaries in the Pioneer, with the result that in spite of "abuse and vituperation" the mission cause was shown to be in a bad way! Then the writer goes on to say that "things have conspired to turn the tide and, want and misery have afforded golden opportunities for conversion."

This kind of statement must afford our missionary friends some amusement at least. But the question arises: How account for the 82% advance in the Punjab, where the famine caused very little distress? Then, why should a famine or a plague further the cause of Christianity?

We think it is true that famine and distress do farther that cause, but it is not true that this result grows out of any influence of money. Is it not rather due to the opportunity to illustrate the spirit of love and self sacrifice of the Christian people, in contrast with the selfishness and indifference of their neighbours? Christianity has its dogmas, but is first of all a life. When the unsophisticated and honest poor see this life, they love it and readily accept it.

The writer then goes on to meet out to missionaries much praise for their brave and self denying labours. "Many of them worked like true soldiers of Christ." There is unfortunately, underlying this praise, the implication that their motives were far from being disinterested. They were working for converts. They succeeded and no one

should grudge them their success.

It may do us good to see ourselves as others see us, but we think that if intelligent writers, like that of the *Messenger*, would only recognize the fact that his countrymen are suffering from a moral and spiritual famine far more deadly than the famine of bread, he might see something noble in the efforts of the missionaries to secure their conversion from sin to holiness. The real question here is whether these masses of ignorant idolaters are not really benefitted by being brought to accept of the pure and holy religion of Jesus Christ. Would they be better off if left in the darkness of milleniums of Aryan Hindu neglect?

We do not deny that the execution of the work of famine relief cost dollars. *But who gave the dollars?* Nay we further ask why were these dollars given? The writer of this article knows they were given by Christian men and women in England, America and other Christian countries, because the people were starving. These dollars were neither given to induce people to become Christians nor did the missionaries distribute them for that purpose. The fact that multitudes became Christians was due to conviction. They saw that the religion of Christ is the religion of God, because it is a religion of love; and God is love.

The religion of Christ is making rapid advancement among the low classes in India, just as it did in Greece and Rome. The slaves believed, while the rich and the great, the learned and influential sneered and scoffed. As in Rome so in India, the heaven of the Gospel will surely reach all classes. These claims may be characterised as "bombastic," but we do not mean to be "bombastic." We simply believe that the Gospel is doing in India just what it did in every Christian country of the world. It may have its variations of hot and cold, of apparent defeat and triumph, but as surely as God lives India will yet be Christian. It may not hold to all the accidental accompaniments of our Western Christianity, but it will have Christ and the way of reconciliation with God through Him and by the Holy Spirit.

We thank this writer for this interesting article. While it misses the mark in its effort to account for the recent success of missions, it affords much food for thought and gives encouragement to all missionary workers. We believe this writer and many others of our educated friends covet that which they admire in Christianity, but they are not prepared to pay the price of its attainment. It is a gift to be sure, but a gift only to him who leaves all else to follow in the steps of Jesus the Christ.

LIVING WITNESSES.

I. A HINDU GENTLEMAN'S TESTIMONY.

N.B. These witnesses are men of high position in the social life of India. Their names are for the present withheld: It is believed that their testimony will encourage many sincere seekers after the way of Life in Jesus Christ.

EDITOR NUR AFSHAN.

I was the only son of a well-to-do high caste *Khatri* or *Khshatriya*, and both my step mother and my own mother were living when my father died about the year 1847. I was then nearly four years of age.

My two widowed mothers were very strict Hindus and, as widows and orthodox *khatris*, they always performed most rigidly all the rites and fastings in a manner that was little short of asceticism. Just after my father's death, they began to worship the idols (*Thāter pooja*) with such tenacity that my mother, who was by far the younger of the two co-wives or widows, was admired by all our community and it was her one aim in life to bring me up as a high caste *khatri*. Accordingly she spared no pains in getting the best *Guru* and most highly educated brahmins to teach me the *Mantras*. After learning the *gāyātrī*, which can only be recited by either brahmins or high caste *Khshatriyas*, I used to stand before the sun after bathing and perform my daily worship, without however understanding a single word, or even the sense of what I used to mutter with my lips. The great mantra was "Om! *bhūr bhuvā sva tud soṁ tūd varāṇāṁ bhargo devāy dhīmī dhiō yonaḥ purcho dīdī*" During this worship, I had to hold my breath, some time stopping one nostril and some time the other.

While a little child, seeing my (widowed) mother worshiping the idols so devoutly, I felt an awe and fear and felt that I was a bad boy, and when I was alone before the idols (*Thakurs*) I uttered a cry in my heart: "Forgive me my past sins and I shall not sin again." One morning, when my mother as usual placed the food before the idols, she rang a tiny bell and sang something closing her eyes. I said to her afterwards, "Why do you close your eyes when the food is placed before the gods?" Don't you know, "my child she said, the gods creep up to the dish" (and taste of the food and thus hallow it, or bless it, and afterwards we all take a little out of it"; "But" she added, if we keep our eyes open the gods will not come to the food."

I thought how grand and wonderful it would be to see the brass

idols dressed up like men and women three or four inches high, walk up to the dish to take little morsels! So I pretended to shut my eyes and put my hands on my face, but just kept a corner of my eye open keeping my fingers slightly apart to see the fun. But no, there was no movement whatever and the tiny figures sat as still as ever. My faith was completely shaken in the Hindoo god; and I got so emboldened that I used to handle them in the absence of my mother of course, otherwise I would without doubt have received a thoroughly sound beating. One morning while playing with the idols I threw a stone god up on the roof of their little house. When I grew up, I began to believe in Muhammadanism, being much under the influence of Muhammadan *Maulvies* and *Mullahs* in whose private schools all Hindoo and Muhammadan boys were brought up. One of my Muhammadan *Maulvies* asked me to steal and bring some nice dishes from our house. I did it believing (as I was taught) that there was no sin in obeying one's teacher.

I grew from bad to worse, and became very fond of teasing and ridiculing Christians. I used to mock them with great delight.

Once in 1862, when I was in Lahore, I saw the late Rev. John Newton (Sr.) and liked his general behaviour towards his hearers. In order to show off that I knew how to speak in the English language I approached him and said that I should like to see him at his house and ask him some questions. Mr. Newton very kindly consented and was very glad to receive me when I went to see him. He was however busy at the time preparing for an itinerating tour, and while he was talking with me his servant came up with some thing made of leather. The servant had evidently spoilt the article. I think it was something important in connection with Mr. Newton's tour. I thought that the *Padri Sahib* would beat this man, like all other English *Sahibs*, who in such cases, at least use harsh language, if they do not strike the servant in fault. But to my surprise there was not even a frown on Mr. Newton's face; and all he did was to say calmly, "*Wāh jī yih kyā kīya*?" Oh Sir what have you done. "I confess that that "*wah jī*" took hold of my mind so firmly that after leaving Mr. Newton, I continued contemplating the subject wondering what sort of religion this good man must have, whose general conduct in every day life is like this. So this was the first serious thought that crossed my mind as regards Christianity and I began to read the Bible. Mr. Newton before

leaving introduced me to the late Rev. Dr. Forman with whom I read the Bible for a short time daily. I began to feel more and more interested in the Book and was convinced that there was no salvation for a sinner out of Christ. I continued in this state of mind for over seven years and went through the entire Bible with Scott's Commentary. During the interval, when my friends and relations came to know of this turn of mind they tried hard to dissuade me from following that, to them, dangerous course; and at times I used to give up all thought of Christianity, but then I would feel unhappy whenever I forsook the study of the Bible and private prayer.

But whenever I saw any Missionary I used to go to him with a peculiar delight in order to speak to him of the things of highest import. I was much benefitted by meeting now and again the late Bishop French, Revd R. Bateman, Revd. Dr. Wherry and the Revd. Dr. C. B. Newton. At times, I had almost made up my mind to become a Christian and to be baptised, but the idea of being an outcaste from a respectable Hindoo family and above all, of leaving my young Hindu wife, of whom I was very fond, was too much for a weak faith like mine. Some times I used to think I should be baptised privately and continue a Hindoo outwardly but a Christian inwardly and yet this did not quite satisfy me. I tried to teach my wife to read the Bible in Gurmukhi but, I had not the courage to tell her that I had made up my mind to follow Christ come what may might.

To be continued.

Current Thought & Incident.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

This question refers to a matter of fact. I do not ask whether the Christian religion is true, but only What is the Christian religion? What is that religion which has existed for eighteen centuries; which is professed by Christendom; and which has been more precious than life itself to millions who have died in its faith, and is so still to millions who possess it as their peace and joy?

But how are we to obtain a satisfactory reply to this question? Are we to examine the opinions of all the various 'churches' 'sects,' 'bodies' professing Christianity, in order to determine what it is they profess? If we adopted such a process of investigation as this, I believe we would reach by a longer road, the very same point which may be reached by a shorter and more satisfactory process.

For I suppose it will be admitted that the Christian religion is what Jesus Christ and His apostles taught, and that we may rely upon the information conveyed to us in the New Testament as to the sum and substance of that teaching.

I do not even insist, as essentials to my argument, upon the inspiration of Scripture, according to any theory whatever of that doctrine; but assume only that we have in the New Testament a true account of the teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles, and that we are able, therefore to ascertain from its pages what their Christianity was as an historical fact, with as much certainty, surely, as we can learn from the Koran what Mohammedanism was as taught by Mohammed, or from any work of philosophy what were the opinions of its author.

Now, if we read the New Testament with ordinary attention, we must, I think, be struck by one feature which is repeated in almost every page, and is manifestly the all pervading spirit and life of its teaching—that is, the peculiar place which Christ occupies in relation to all other persons mentioned there. This person Jesus Christ whoever He was, stands out prominently before every other teacher of Christian truth. The apostles speak of Him, point to Him, plead for Him, labour for Him. He is not the greatest Teacher merely among themselves, but the only Teacher, and they but His scholars, who glory in having nothing of their own to impart, and in being ministers, 'stewards,' only of what they have received from Him their Master. The subject of all their preaching is this Person—not a system of morality, or doctrines, or truths, apart from, but embodied in Him who was the Truth and the Life—Jesus Christ. The text of all their teaching is, 'God forbid that we should know anything among you save Jesus Christ.' In order to see this, take up any epistle, and mark how often the name of Jesus Christ appears as the ever-present thought, the centre of every idea.

Again, consider how this Person is inseparably connected with every motive, every duty, every joy and hope of the Christian as he is described in the New Testament. Christian love is there, not love merely in the abstract, (if such is in any case possible) but love to Jesus Christ, and to all men, because 'in Christ.' The grand question proposed is, 'Lovest thou Me?' Christian obedience is not obedience merely to a code of moral precepts, but to Jesus Christ and 'His commandments.' Christian faith is not faith in 'mysteries,' or things unseen, or truths revealed, though such faith

may be Christian, but its essence is faith in Jesus Christ the living Person; the supreme command being, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.' The Christian's hope is 'hope in Christ,' his joy, 'joy in Christ,' his peace, 'peace in Christ,' his labour labour in Christ; his strength, 'strength in Christ,' his life, life in Christ; his death, 'death in Christ,' his immortality, 'rising in Christ,' his salvation, 'salvation through Christ,' and his heaven, 'to be with Christ.' On the other hand, all that is evil and disastrous to the soul is summed up in being 'without Christ.' To reject Christ, not to believe in Christ, to be enemies of Christ, to despise Christ, to be ignorant of Christ, to lose Christ, to be commanded at the last to depart from Christ—these are the characteristics of the wicked and lost: for 'there is no other name given among men whereby man can be saved than the name of Jesus Christ.'

You will observe that I am not at present discussing what Christ has done for us, but what, as a matter of fact, Jesus Christ claimed from us, and from all men, and recognised to be the religion which he came to establish upon earth. I repeat it, therefore, that whether these claims were founded on fact or fiction, whether the religion which he taught was true or false, in accordance with, or opposed to, the will of God, that nevertheless its sum and substance is supreme love to Jesus Christ.

Now, if this, or anything even approaching to this is true, my reader will, I am sure, acknowledge that it is not possible to separate Christ from the Christianity of the New Testament. The person and the "religion" become, in fact, identical—so far at least that both must be received or rejected. That a code of morals may be extracted from the New Testament, and Jesus Himself, as its centre, be put aside, is quite possible; or that the character of Jesus may be recognised as a perfect example of what He taught, a living embodiment of His beautiful precepts, is also possible without recognising His claim to the supreme love and unlimited obedience of every human being; but the question still remains, whether this 'philosophic' or 'rational' system—this Christianity is really the Christianity taught by Christ, or by Peter, Paul and John? I do not argue as to which 'religion,' 'system' or 'Christianity' is the best, but ask only a question of fact, Which do you candidly believe to be the Christianity of the New Testament? If you hesitate ere you reply to this question of historical fact, open again the New Testament, with a manly resolution to examine it, and obtain information, and ask its pages, What is Christianity? Read even

such passages as the following:—John x., xiv., and xv.; Acts, first four chapters; the Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians, portions of Scripture which may be read almost in an hour or two. You do not require to master the whole world of truth which is there revealed but only to notice the *Sun* of that world; and say, is it not faith in Jesus, love to Jesus, obedience to Jesus as to no one else in the universe except to God Almighty?

I at once frankly express my earnest conviction that this, if true, involves the truth of what are recognised to be the other 'peculiar' doctrines or facts of Christianity—such as the divine, as well as holy and perfect character of the Person of His love to us and that which most of all kindles love in us to Him;—the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through whom alone we, who are spiritually blind, can so perceive the spiritual character and glory of Jesus as to admire and love Him;—and prayer, by which we can hold actual, personal intercourse with, and thus come to know and love Jesus more and more from experience: these, I say, and other doctrines appear to me to be involved in the very idea that Christianity is supreme love to Jesus Christ. But I shall not consider any of them except one, the first and all important, the very pillar and ground of the truth—viz., the divinity of Christ's Person.

To be continued.

Telegrams.

London, Feb. 1. A satisfactory feature of the situation in Transvaal is the increasing popularity of the National Scouts, nearly 300 of whom joined last week. Many other burghers have joined the Intelligence Department.

London, Feb. 2. De Wet's bodyguard on the 25th attacked the South Africa Light Horse at the Wilgo River. The enemy were heavily shelled and repulsed.

The New Zealand contingent, which left Auckland for South Africa yesterday, had an enthusiastic send-off. Mr. Seddon (the Premier), in addressing the men, said that New Zealand was determined to assist in ending the war, and would cheerfully give a twentieth contingent if required to do so.

London, Feb. 1. Two hundred and ten Japanese troops, commanded by a Major, who left Domori on the 23rd ultimo to practise marching in snow, lost their way. The cold was intense, and only 71 survived on the 25th, and finally all perished but one.

London, Feb. 1. The *Times* Pekin correspondent states that Britain and Japan supported America in the protest against the grant of exclusive rights in Manchuria to the Russo-Chinese Bank. The signature of the agreement is accordingly delayed.

China has paid the first instalment, 1,820,000 taels, of the war indemnity.

London, Feb. 2. The Dowager-Empress and the Emperor accompanied by brilliant assemblage, yesterday received at Pekin the ladies and children of the Legations. They sobbingly acknowledged their mistake of attack on the Legations, and promised that China would abandon her isolation and adopt features of Western life in future.

An edict of the Dowager-Empress permits marriages of Manchus with Chinese, recommends the abolition of foot-binding by women, and directs that members of noble families should go abroad and acquire foreign education.

Calcutta, Feb. 3. A special telegram to the *Indian Daily News* says:—

The chairman of the Eastern Telegraph Company has confirmed the *Daily News* statement regarding the reduction of the cable rates to India to half a crown per word. The reduction will come into force shortly.

Calcutta, Feb. 2. A special telegram to the *Indian Daily News* says:—

Miss Roosevelt, daughter of President Roosevelt, will, it is stated, attend the coronation of King Edward.

London, Feb. 1. A heavy gale has raged for the last twenty-four hours in England and Western Europe, and all telephones and telegraphs are dislocated.

Allahabad, Feb. 1. Abdul Rauf Khan, who accompanied Sardar Nasrulla Khan to London as Private Secretary, and afterwards became Kotwal of Kabul, has been dismissed from the service of the Amir for corruption. The ex-Kotwal is said to have amassed a large fortune by accepting bribes.

Another trusted servant of the late Amir, Mullah Tak Ali Khan, formerly Agent at Peshawar, has been arrested on a charge of foreign false documents with the aid of an imitation of Abdur Rahman's seal. He is now undergoing rigorous imprisonment in a gruesome Kabul dungeon, known as "the Dark Well."

London, Feb. 3. It is generally believed that the Dutch proposals regarding the Boers have been rejected.

It is stated at the Hague that Holland intends to re-model her offer and renew diplomatic representations with Great Britain.

The negotiations are likely to be prolonged.

London, Feb. 3. The following is the result of the election for the seat at Ecclesall, rendered vacant by the death of Sir Ashmead Bartlett, —Mr. Roberts, the Conservative candidate, 5,231; Mr. Vaile, Liberal, 4,119.

London, Feb. 3. The gale has disorganised the Channel services. The Ostend packet *Marie Henriette* with a disabled paddle has been drifting in the storm off Ostend since Friday.

London, Feb. 3. In the match at Sydney the Englishmen have made 650 for four Wickets, MacLaren 167, Hayward 174 and Tydesly 142.

Allahabad, Feb. 4.

A special telegram to the *Pioneer* dated January 3rd, says:—

The engagement is announced of Lord Lytton and Miss Pamela Plowden, well-known in Indian Society as a daughter of Sir Trevor J. Chichele Plowden, formerly Resident of Hyderabad.

London, Feb. 4. One thousand Maoris have volunteered for garrison or other duty anywhere in the Empire, and 5,000 are available if needed. The Earl of Munster has been accidentally killed in South Africa.

Lord Lansdowne in his reply to the note from the Dutch Government, summarises the Dutch Proposal, which was to grant a safe-conduct to Boer delegates to enable them to confer with the leaders in South Africa, the delegates afterwards to return to Europe empowered to conclude a treaty with Britain, when Holland might be instrumental in placing the Boer and British plenipotentiaries in communication.

Lord Lansdowne, in his reply, says that the British Government, while entirely appreciating Holland's motives of humanity, must adhere to its decision not to accept the intervention of any foreign Power, and that clearly the quickest and best means of arranging a settlement would be direct communication between Lord Kitchener and the Boer leaders in Africa. The Government has decided if any such negotiations take place that they must take place not in Europe, but in Africa.

London, Feb. 4. Two British columns had further fighting with the Aros tribe in Nigeria in which the Aros lost heavily. The British had one killed and 14 wounded, including a white officer.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Two lakhs of rupees have been set aside for camps of exercise in the four commands for the current year.

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